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Introduction

The territory where Catalan is spoken potentially comprises some 13 million people. Seven million can be found in Catalonia, five million in Valencia and one million in the Balearic Islands. There are also Catalan speakers found in the territory of Aragon, the principality of Andorra, the Pyrénées-Orientales area of France, *Catalunya Nord* and the Italian city of l'Alguer. In the Catalan language, these territories are referred to by nationalists as the *Països Catalans* (the Catalan-speaking countries). However, this designation is rejected by both conservative and liberal regionalists in the territory of Valencia, as is the use of the term 'Catalan' to describe the regional language. There is thus no consensus over Catalan cultural, political or indeed territorial identity. This makes the Catalan case somewhat unusual in European terms, as Catalan nation-building was focused on a core territory rather than a potentially much greater area.

The major themes of modern Europe, from urbanisation and industrialisation to the adoption of a railway, were late arrivals in Spain. Yet it was on the periphery of Spain that the earliest expressions of modernisation took place, in particular in the territory of Catalonia which, by the late nineteenth century, was the most dynamic centre of industrial and cultural power in Spain. Cultural and political revival was more halting in the case of Valencia and the Balearics, and the centralising and homogenising processes in the French state led to the gradual erosion of Catalan identity in *Catalunya Nord*. A political movement encompassing all territories as one national unit failed to develop and this failure of pan-Catalanism gave rise to distinctive territorial responses: Catalan nationalism, Valencian regionalism, Mallorcan regionalism and so on. In particular, the politics of identity in Valencia has been determined by anti-Catalanism, with a smaller movement of a similar tendency emerging in the Balearics. The twentieth century is witness to the variable strengths of movements of cultural and political autonomy with Catalonia playing a leading role throughout, achieving its own autonomy in 1932 and 1979. Furthermore, the territories of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands also developed their own distinctive labour movements, which were usually unsympathetic to nationalist expression and all three territories experienced the clash between organised labour and nationalism. This conflict was made more complex by the interaction of indigenous forces with the ever-increasing number of Spanish-speaking migrants that arrived in all three territories over the course of the twentieth century.

When a political movement of Catalan nationalism first appeared, it had two principle areas of concern: autonomy for Catalonia and a strategy of Catalan leadership in Spain. Catalan nationalism was distinctive to that of its

other Spanish counterpart, the Basque Country, where a firm commitment to political independence was found in the movement's origins. At the same time, Basque nationalist demands for what they termed the natural territorial unit extended to three small provinces in France and the province of Navarre. Yet in the Catalan case, the claim to the wider territories, or pan-Catalanism, remained a marginal and minority strand within the Catalan national movement. The focus of this work will be solely on the principality of Catalonia.

In the Middle Ages, Catalonia was a central component in the medieval crown of Aragon, becoming a Mediterranean power. Due to dynastic factors, it became united in a royal union with the kingdom of Castile in 1479. However, it is important to note that the respective kingdoms represented more of an Austro-Hungarian confederation than anything that could be said to resemble the English incorporation of Wales, or that of Brittany by France. The dynastic union of the Spanish monarchs in the late fifteenth century did not signify the cultural unification of the territories of the Spanish state. This was a myth particularly propagated by Francoist historians, who invoked the period of the Catholic Monarchs as Spain's political Golden Age. Catalan language retained its high status as did Catalan literary and cultural expressions. To progress socially required the knowledge of Catalan. The Spanish monarchy dominated Europe in the sixteenth century and it became increasingly clear that the larger part of it, Castile, was likely to dominate the whole. By this point Castile had over five times the population of the kingdom of Aragon. That Catalonia underwent a decline over several centuries from the sixteenth century is not usually contested by historians, though the exact moment of the reversal of this decline is more subject to debate. The period was marked by peasant rebellion, plague and war between the nobility, all of which greatly weakened the Catalan economy.

In 1640, Catalonia rebelled against increasing centralisation from Castile. In the same period Portugal, which had been incorporated by Castile, obtained its independence. Catalonia, however, was defeated and one consequence was the cessation of its northern counties to France. This resulted in the loss of one-fifth of Catalonia's population and is an area that is still evoked as *terra irredenta* today. 'Spain as a unified political entity dates from approximately 1715.'[1] Here again the origins of this transformation are dynastic and the attempt by the early modern Spanish state to reverse its own decline by centralisation. Spanish geo-political weakness had been starkly revealed by the War of the Spanish Succession, where two of Europe's leading monarchical powers sought a candidate for the Spanish throne. The victory of the Bourbons represented a severe defeat for Catalonia and the imposition of a centralised model. Barcelona was besieged and occupied. From this period onwards, the major political and economic decisions concerning Catalonia were made in Madrid.

During Catalonia's long eighteenth century, lasting perhaps until the 1830s, the basis for its economic contrast with the rest of Spain was laid. In the late nineteenth century, during what has become known as the European Age of Nationalism, the cultural and political project of Catalanism emerged in a Spain which was marked by isolation and backwardness. For Catalonia's leading theorist of Catalanism, Enric Prat de la Riba, Catalans are Spaniards who wish to construct a different Spain. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence and consolidation of Catalan nationalism. Furthermore, Catalonia was also distinctive due to the existence of a powerful and unique labour movement centred on anarchism which clashed directly and frequently with the nationalist movement. Much of the early decades of the twentieth century are witness to this struggle between Catalanism and organised labour. Rapid industrialisation and modernisation in a backwards state led to the rise of the regionalist movement in the late nineteenth century. Weak democratisation led to the emergence of the most powerful anarchist movement in world history. Modern Catalan society has experienced an exceptional degree of upheaval. The Spanish military and police performed key suppressive roles between 1902 and 1923.

Spain has also felt itself threatened by the emergence of both Catalan and Basque nationalisms which have been seen as profound challenges to the very essence of the Spanish Fatherland. This conflict over differing conceptions of Spain and the role of national diversity within it would be resolved in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939. With Franco's and Spanish nationalism's victory in 1939, and the consolidation of a long-lasting dictatorship, a final resolution was sought for Spain's minority nations problem. Defeat in civil war broke the natural development of Catalonia's political culture, which contributed greatly to the intellectual vitality of Spain from the mid-nineteenth century. Francoism had an impact beyond anything previously seen, including the defeats of 1659 and 1714.

For 45 years of the twentieth century Catalonia was governed under military dictatorship and during the long-lasting dictatorship of Franco an attempt was made at the elimination of its cultural identity. It appeared certain that under the conditions of early Francoism the Catalan national movement would be crushed. Yet this did not happen and Catalan nationalism and identity re-emerged at the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975 more firmly rooted than before the civil war. The defeat of labour made possible the assent of nationalism and its subsequent dominance. The reconstruction of Catalan nationalism was facilitated by two parallel though distinctive factors. Firstly, the crushing by the Franco regime of the old forms of working-class organisation. At the end of the Franco dictatorship, in contrast to its beginning, there was a labour force that was no longer in conflict with Catalanism. The second key element in the ascendance of nationalism was the restoration of Catholicism.

In July 1936, on the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan Church underwent a ferocious assault, without precedent in modern European history. One-third of the religious killings that took place in Spain during the Civil War occurred in Catalonia. In fact, it is no exaggeration to state that in proportionate terms Catalonia experienced the greatest anti-religious outbreak in modern European history. As will be seen, Francoist victory in the Civil War gave the Church a perhaps unique opportunity, not only to restore its position, but to become a part of the Francoist triumvirate of power, in

alliance with the *Falange* and the military. However, this restoration would give the Church an opportunity to become not only central to the Catalan nation, but to play an important role in the reconstruction and revival of Catalanism.

The preservation and revival of Catalan identity during the most brutal years of the dictatorship, the 1940s, was centred around the Catalan Church. Catholicism was, of course, one of the pillars of the Franco regime, yet all of the important steps in the Catalanist revival under Franco occurred through the aid and activity of the Church. The first books published in the Catalan language after 1939 were religious and the first public uses of the Catalan language were at Catholic masses. A central role in the religious use of Catalan was provided by the monastery of Montserrat. Montserrat published the first monthly magazine in Catalan, *Germinàbit*, which appeared in 1949, and was itself the predecessor to *Serra d'Or*, a publication that became the main legal forum for Catalanist debate after 1959. Innumerable publications, magazines, parish bulletins and books and so on emerged through the Church in the 1950s using Catalan as their medium. Between 1939 and 1976, over 1,200 books on religious subjects were published in the Catalan language and until the mid 1940s these were the only books published in Catalan. The first wave of post-war Catalan literature also shared the mores of Catholicism, and can be said to have been imbued with a cultural relationship to religion. Catholic sectors were also responsible for the cautious reconstruction of civil society in the 1940s and 1950s. However, the Catalan Church, in contrast to previous eras, attained for itself a new consensual position in national life. The Church's involvement with the nationalist revival under Franco enabled this transformation.

The Franco regime in Catalonia and the Catalan nationalist response to it is marked by two essential divisions. The period until the mid 1960s was one of Catholic hegemony within Catalanism. After about 1965, whilst the Church's contribution continued, its primary importance declined, though the activities of lay Catholic Catalanists expanded. A new business sector would emerge in Catalonia during the 1950s centred on publishing and financial services, and this sector would become the backbone of the Catalan nationalist business class. This new business class had its counterpart in other areas of Spain and looked to and identified strongly with its west European counterparts. This liberal and relatively enlightened bourgeoisie believed that a western parliamentary system was a better guarantor of business stability than the often irrational rule of Franco's governing elite. Large-scale social and economic change brought about by the ending of Spanish economic isolation in the late 1950s gave new opportunities to sectors of Catalan business and to all of those involved in cultural production, whether the singers of the Catalan language 'New Song' movement or the writers and publishers of the new Catalan fiction that emerged in the 1960s. The position of the Catalan Church in society was transformed during this period so that for groups such as the Catalan Communists, the Catalan Church came to be seen as the 'national' Church of Catalonia and part of the national idea of Catalonia in the same way that the Polish Catholic Church became so for Polish secular intellectuals during their own experience of dictatorship. The strategy of National Reconciliation pursued by Catalan and Spanish communism from the late 1950s encouraged this positive assessment of the role of the Church. This was also facilitated by a growing tendency amongst elements of the priesthood to begin to engage in social questions.

Although Catalan nationalism remained a *bête noire* for the regime, due to the Church's privileges Catholic Catalanism was the sector of the Catalan opposition least susceptible to brutal repression and was able to make the greatest advances post-1939. This Catholic Catalanism had been a minority expression of Catalanism prior to 1939. Though less tolerated than Spanish and Christian Democrat monarchist opponents of Franco, the narrow stratum of Catholic Catalanism practised a strategy of the accumulation of small concessions, which through their piecemeal nature the regime found difficult to rescind. However, this relative tolerance was instituted after the repression meted out to all the non-Francoist elements of Catalan political life in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and throughout most of the early 1940s. During the course of this work the reasons for the decline of Leftist anti-clericalism in Catalonia will be explained, though of course the disappearance of anarchism and the anarcho-syndicalists played an important role in this process. A further factor was the contribution of sections of the Church to providing meeting places for trades unions and the Communist-inspired Assembly of Catalonia in the 1970s. This study argues that over the course of the Franco regime, the political expression of Catalan nationalism, in contrast to the periods of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the Second Republic (1923–1939), underwent a cultural and political Catholicisation. This Catholicisation occurred at the level of the proto-political elites of the nationalist opposition. The Catholicisation is demonstrated by the emergence of *Convergència Democràtica* at the end of the regime. *Convergència* emerged from the terrain of Catalan political culture that was not directly repressed by the regime: the Catalan Church, the business and financial strata and the cultural community. This can be contrasted with the experience of the labour movement in Catalonia and its activists during the dictatorship.[2] In December 1985, the Catalan Church issued a document known as the 'Christian Roots of Catalonia'. Its import was such that it was described as the first doctrinal text of the Church relating to the Catalan national question.[3] The Church gave clear recognition to Catalonia as a nation.

The demise of anarcho-syndicalism and its replacement by the Catalan communists and trades union ensured that anti-Catalanism played no part in opposition to the regime. Prior to the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan national movement had been regarded with deep suspicion by organised labour. Francoism determined a transformation in the relationship between labour and Catalanism. The PSUC found itself in a pivotal position to lead the anti-Francoist struggle, determining that 'bourgeois leadership' of the national movement was at an end.[4] Whilst the dominance of the left in the anti-Francoist struggle was of critical importance, the transition in Spain and

Catalonia represented the defeat for the left political forces. Conservative Catalan nationalism dominated the post-transition political outcome. Left and social democratic traditions would not achieve electoral victory in the Catalan elections until 2003, by which time there was little radicalism found within the disparate traditions. Until 2003, CiU was the most important nationalist formation in the Spanish state and the most electorally successful representative of state-less nationalism in western Europe, winning six consecutive Catalan elections between 1980 and 1999. At various times since the restoration of democracy, CiU has played a pivotal role at a Spanish level. CiU's support of minority Madrid governments was instituted in the late 1970s with its external support of Adolfo Suárez and the UCD and was replicated first with the Spanish Socialists from 1993 to 1996, and again from 1996 to 2000, in support of the conservative *Partido Popular*. This gave to political Catalanism unprecedented influence not seen since before the Spanish Civil War.

The period since the early 1980s has seen the greatest transformation in the political project of Catalanism since its emergence in the late nineteenth century. Catalanism, a movement that emerged in a culturally and economically advanced area of Spain, sought in its initial phase until the Spanish Civil War, for autonomy to be a tool in the modernisation of Spain. This project was abruptly halted by the Civil War and the long night of Francoism. Catalanism under the conditions of the Franco regime was a movement concerned with the protection and survival of a threatened cultural identity. In spite of the Catalan revival of the 1960s, Catalanism sought, in general terms, to restore the position which existed in 1939. Yet the movement did change in certain key aspects, though until the latter part of the first decade of the twenty-first century, independence was peripheral to it. Given the grave consequences of Francoism for the Catalan national movement, it is unsurprising that from the late 1970s onwards, the main focus was one of reconstruction.

It was only after some 20 years of nationalist rebuilding that flaws in this strategy became apparent. European union had not produced a withering away of the Spanish state. Other failures became apparent including that of the hopes once invested in the Committee of the Regions of the European Union. New developments, in particular the growth and consolidation of Madrid and the new immigration, determined the end of the strategy of political Catalanism as it had existed for most of the twentieth century. This crisis produced the emergence of sovereignty and independence as movements that sought to lead Catalan society in a new direction. The failures associated with the reform of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, the *Estatut*, between 2006 and 2010 strengthened these discourses. The new century has been marked by an ever-growing independence movement, culminating in the nationalist demonstration in the city of Barcelona in July 2010. The final section of this study ends with a reflection on this new pro-independence turn in Catalan nationalism. With Scottish nationalism also seeking to build a coalition for independence, two of Europe's oldest unified states, Spain and the United Kingdom, face movements that may bring to an end their respective unions.

The question for both Spain and Catalonia will be whether there can be a successful *encaix* (fit) that can satisfy both parties. If autonomy is no longer able to satisfy the main goals of Catalan society, breach with Spain seems the only alternative.